

Introduction:

Analysis of Local government Survey in Southeast Asia

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In the 1990s and 2000s, after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in the Philippines, Indonesia's and Thailand's decentralization was followed by democratization. While some repercussions were observed following decentralization, local governance became widely accepted and consolidated. Indonesia and the Philippines even elected presidents who had been successful as municipal mayors. Local leadership, therefore, became an important career path in these countries.

Decentralization is observed in a sense as a universal phenomenon. Decentralization took place in former communist regimes in post-Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, and in developing countries in Africa and Latin America. Decentralization was considered one of the important conditions for former communist regime in Eastern Europe to join in the European Union. In many cases, decentralization was an important component in structural adjustment plans requested by international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations Development Program, for development assistance in Africa and Latin America. Decentralization is considered an important measure to remedy the adverse effects of over-centralization and to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of policy implementation. People's participation in the development planning and implementation by local governments is also strongly recommended. The Japan International Cooperation Agency also has various programs to enhance the capacity of local governments in Southeast Asia and Africa.

Japan was not exceptional in its provision of aid or in its decentralization. With the world facing the end of the Cold War and an increase of expenditures in social securities and national deficits, decentralization was promoted in the 1990s and 2000s. In order to facilitate the comprehensive community care system, many local governments were recommended to merge to strengthen fiscal basis. As a result, the number of local governments in Japan decreased from 3,234 in 1995 to 1,718 in 2013 almost by a half.

Thus, decentralization is considered to be one of the mega trends in the world, in particular, after the end of the Cold War. Many studies have been conducted on decentralization. Most research on decentralization and local governance is country-specific. Comparative research on decentralization and local governance does exist, but these studies tend to compare national characteristics among OECD developed countries. Systematic in-depth research on individual local governments from a comparative perspective is still lacking. Regarding country-specific research on decentralization and local governance, quantitative research focuses on local elections and local finance. Systematic research on the ideas and behavioral patterns of local government elites, including bureaucrats, is quite rare. Some reports by the World Bank on local governance focus on particular countries, but in most cases local governments are not selected based on random sampling; seemingly, representative local governments are intentionally selected.

According to Charles M. Tiebout, a public finance specialist, local governments will compete with each other and better public service will be delivered if local residents move flexibly according to the contents provided by each local government (Tiebout 1956). This hypothesis is called “voting with their feet,” because local residents can choose their preferred local governments by moving their address. However, it is not clear if this hypothesis is supported by empirical studies.

As a result, several questions arise: Does decentralization promote democracy? Does decentralization enhance the quality of public service delivered to local residents by local governments? Does decentralization enhance the performance of local governments? If so, what factors contribute to this phenomenon? Is the idea of “good governance,” recommended by international organizations, widely accepted and implemented in developing countries? These questions are explored this study.

Needless to say, the free and fair election of municipal mayors and local councilors are indispensable preconditions for this kind of research. Local governments should be empowered and secured in fiscal terms in order to implement public policies. The quality of public policies may heavily rely on socioeconomic conditions, such as industrial structure, degree of urbanization, topographical characteristics, and the gap between the rich and the poor. However, other factors, such as social attributes of municipal mayors and top local bureaucrats, relationships between local governments and stakeholders, the central government, national politicians, local politicians, local heads, and even local residents, are also influential. This study is very interested in those other factors in the analysis of local governance of Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, three major countries in Southeast Asia.

1 Backgrounds of Local Government Survey in Southeast Asia

This study was supported by the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A) of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), adopted in the year 2009 under the title of “Local Government Survey in Southeast Asia: Comparison among Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines” (from FY2009 to FY2012. Principal investigator: Fumio Nagai). Prior to this study, a preceding local government survey had been conducted in Thailand by the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University, which was commissioned by the IDE-JETRO in 2006 (Nagai, Nakharin, and Funatsu 2008). In fact, a local government survey in Southeast Asia was conducted based on the experiences and knowledge gained from this local Thai government survey.

When the local government survey in Thailand was commissioned at first, mayors and top local bureaucrats in selected local governments were targeted. In the implementation stage, however, Thammasat University decided to deliver questionnaires to all local governments nationwide through mail, by using their own research fund. Thammasat University was also responsible for data input. Nagai and Funatsu were involved in preparing for questionnaires and conducted pre-tests in local Thai governments on a regular basis from September 2005 to March 2006. Two types of questionnaires were provided: one for local government heads and the other for top bureaucrats. Although questionnaires were disseminated through mail, the collection ratio of questionnaires was 35% (Funatsu 2008). This experience indicated a new horizon for research on local governance not only in Thailand but also in other Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

From 2009 to 2011, meetings were repeatedly convened to understand the local government system and decentralization in the three countries. In the meantime, field research was also conducted to explore research counterpart institutions and public opinion polls to conduct elite surveys in the respective countries. As a result, a local elite survey was conducted in the Philippines and Island of Java, Indonesia, from late 2011 to March 2012, and in Thailand from early 2013 to the middle of 2014 (see Table 1).

Table 1 General Features of Local Government Survey in Southeast Asia

	Philippines (2011–12)	Indonesia (2011–12)	Thailand (2005–6)	Thailand (2013–14)
Method	Interviews	Interviews and mailing	Mailing	Interviews and mailing
Interviewee	Mayor and Urban Planning Officer	Top bureaucrat (<i>sekda</i>) and President	Mayor and top bureaucrat (<i>palat</i>)	Mayor and Top bureaucrat (<i>palat</i>)
Samples	Randomly selected samples (300 local governments)	Local governments in the Island of Java	All local governments except BMA	Randomly selected samples
Counterpart	Social Weather Stations (SWS)	Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI)	Thammasat University	Nielsen Thailand and Thammasat University

Source: Authors.

In the meantime, another research project was initiated at IDE-JETRO in April 2009 under the research project entitled “Comparative Studies on the Governance of the Local Governments in Southeast Asia.” Members of this research projects partnered with those from the JSPS research project. This IDE project aims to inquire about local government systems as well as local governance in Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Results of this research project were compiled and published in 2012 (Funatsu and Nagai 2012). We also applied for financial assistance from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies for the research project entitled “Comparative Research on People’s Participation in Local Governance: Thailand, The Philippines and Indonesia” in FY2009 and FY2010 (principal investigator: Fumio Nagai) and another research project, entitled “Constructing Local Government Theory in Southeast Asia: On the Basis of Local Government Survey in Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia” in FY2011 and FY2012 (principal investigator: Kenichi Nishimura).

Moreover, following a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A) conducted from FY2009 to FY2012, another Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) was adopted in the year 2013, under the title of “Comparative Study of Local Government Survey in Southeast Asia: Comparison among Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia” (from FY2013 to FY2016, principal investigator: Fumio Nagai). This research fund supported the cleaning of survey data, analysis of simple tabulation, and research meetings in the respective countries to report the result of this survey and to get feedback from the

target countries. Then, the IDE project entitled “Local Government Survey in Southeast Asia: Comments and Data Processing for Comparison” was initiated in FY2017. This study could not have been conducted without efforts to continue survey data analysis.

2 Characteristics of Local Governments of Three Countries in Southeast Asia and Collected Survey Data

Different from social surveys on individuals, surveys on local government as political institutions have their own challenges. While public opinion surveys are usually conducted by an examiner visiting an individual’s household, it is not easy to meet with local government elites to complete questionnaires. It is even difficult to make appointments with municipal mayors, as these appointments are often cancelled or seen as inconvenient. Selecting which local governments to include in the study is another important aspect. The same thing is true of the Philippines, despite the difference in territory. Even in Thailand, which is geographically united, it is rather expensive to visit local governments in rural areas or mountainous areas by land.

Furthermore, though this study pays special attention to municipalities, which are very close to local residents, their size and number are quite different among the three countries. Naturally, it is also difficult to prepare common questions among the three countries (Table 2). For instance, the average population size of the municipal levels in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand are almost equal to, roughly speaking, a ratio of 60:6:1. Thus, although the Thai local government survey of 2006 offers a valuable model for questionnaires for the Philippines and Indonesia, we have to consider the situation and context in each country as individual and distinct when preparing questionnaires.

In fact, the number of questionnaires collected in the three countries varies, reflecting the difference in population size under the local government and its accessibility by residents. The most successful survey was implemented in the Philippines. Some three hundred cities and municipalities nationwide (except for the Muslim-Mindanao area) were randomly selected, and all responses from both municipal mayors and urban planning officers were collected (Kobayashi et al. 2013).

Table 2 Comparison of local governments among three countries

	Indonesia	Philippines	Thailand
Population	228 million (estimate of 2008)	88.6million (estimate of August 2007)	65.7 million (estimate of June 2007)
Numbers of LG tiers	2 tiers	3 tiers	2 tiers
Numbers of LGs in each tier	Province (33) (as of 2008)	Province (80)	Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO) (76)
		Highly urbanized city/independent composed city	
	District (375)	Composed city (137)	Municipality (2,082), Tambon Administrative Organization (5,693)
	Municipality (90)	Town (1,497)	
	Village	Barangay (42,023)	—
Others	Jakarta Special Province (1 tier)	Muslim Mindanao Autonomous District	Special local government (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Pattaya City)

Source: Funatsu and Nagai (2012).

Note: LG=local government.

In Indonesia, due to financial constraints, the idea to conduct surveys in other islands except for Java was abandoned. In other words, we focused only on local governments on the island of Java. Considering the difficulties with accessing provincial governors and city mayors, we focused on the highest rank bureaucrat, local secretary (Sekda in Indonesian language), through interviews. This approach proved to be successful, as we collected responses from 103 local governments from a total of 112 in Java Island. As for provincial governors and city mayors, we experimentally sent questionnaires, which was in vain (collection ratio was less than 20%).

The survey conducted in Thailand in 2013 and 2014 proved to not be as impressive as in 2006. As Table 3 shows, the collection ration in both urban local governments (*thesaban*) and rural local governments (Tambon Administrative Organizations or TAOs) amounts to around 50%, despite the use of mixed methodology for interviewing and posting.

Table 3 Result of Collection of Questionnaires in the Second Thai Local Government Survey, 2013-14

Unit	<i>Thesaban</i>	TAOs
Number of collected questionnaires	209 (45.2%)	253 (54.8%)
Nationwide	2,038 (27.3%)	5,429 (72.7%)

Source: Nagai, Kagoya, and Funatsu (2017: 82).

Note: Number of local governments nationwide is as of December 30, 2011. Based on this data, random sampling was conducted. *Thesaban* and TAOs in the four southernmost provinces, namely, Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Satun, were excluded, and the Pattaya city was included.

3 Decentralization of Three Countries in Southeast Asia

In order to understand the contexts of local governance in the three countries in the following chapters, it will be useful to briefly sketch the course of decentralization in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia.

In 1986, the Marcos Regime collapsed as a result of EDSA 1 in the Philippines. The new constitution was promulgated in 1987 and Local Government Act was promulgated in 1991. Based on this Act, the city and municipal mayors and provincial governors were all directly elected by local residents. Some national hospitals, health centers, and social workers were transferred from the central government to local governments. In order to promote participation of the people, a local development council was set up to include representatives from NGOs. Barangays, the grassroots administrative divisions closest to local residents, were also empowered by soliciting development funds from the central government. Barangay captains and council members are all directly elected by local residents. Though some hospitals and health centers were recentralized from local governments to the central government, there has been little institutional change in the Philippines.

Democratization and decentralization in Thailand began after 1992, when mass demonstrations to resist military-led government were suppressed by police force. Democratically elected governments promoted democratization and decentralization. Since 1995, new local governments, TAOs, were set up in rural areas. The 1997 Thai Constitution, the most democratic constitution in Thai political history, stipulates that decentralization is a fundamental state policy. The Decentralization Promotion Act of 1999 empowered the National Decentralization Committee to prepare a decentralization

plan to transfer duties, financial sources, and personnel to local governments. The decentralization plan could have been implemented smoothly, but in 2008, when another plan was drafted, the ratio of local expenditure vis-à-vis total governmental expenditure surpassed 25%, and 180 duties were transferred from the central government to local governments among 245 duties as of 2007. Direct elections of local government heads have been gradually introduced since late 2003, instead of through mutual election among local councilors, which would strengthen their legitimacy. The military coup d'état did influence decentralization. National political conflicts between the so-called yellow shirts, who oppose former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and so-called red shirts, which support Mr. Thaksin, halted decentralization. The 2007 Thai Constitution, which was promulgated under military-support government, stipulates that decentralization is a fundamental state policy. Since the military coup on May 2014, all elections, national or local, have been prohibited. Though local government heads remain in their posts, there are many restrictions on the activities of local governments. Public views on corruption committed by local politicians are severe. In fact, a military leader mentioned abolishment of all local governments. Recently, local Thai governments have been reevaluated because of their roles in garbage disposal and elderly care.

After the collapse of the Soeharto Regime on May 1998 in Indonesia, Law No. 22 (Local Government Act) and No. 25 (Local Finance Act) were promulgated in order to maintain national unity. Local heads were elected from local councilors, and after 2005, they were elected by local residents directly. National subsidies were transferred from the central government to local governments based on the allocation rule, which strengthened the financial basis of local Indonesian governments. States that are rich in natural resources are entitled to have special financial delivery, which contributed to softening their antagonism toward the central government. In 2001, a large-scale devolution was implemented. Except for the basic policy areas, all duties and responsibilities were transferred from the central government to local governments. As a result, almost two million national bureaucrats were transferred to local governments. In 2004, a direct election of local heads took place, which strengthened their legitimacy and institutional prerogative. Though there was some recentralization in 2005 by issuing Laws No. 33 and No. 35 to strengthen the supervision of the state governments to local governments (provinces and cities), decentralized political framework has not changed. In 2012, the central government started to directly deliver development funds to villages, bypassing cities and provinces.

3.1 Local Government Actors

Question 1. What kind of people are local government elites (local government chiefs and top bureaucrats)?

It was very common that local government chiefs in the three Southeast Asian countries were appointed bureaucrats by the central government before decentralization in the 1990s. Even after democratization and decentralization, ex-top bureaucrats and traditional local notables often became elected local government chiefs. Thus, some scholars on local governance in Southeast Asia contend that oligarchical rule is continuing even after democratization and decentralization. It would be valuable to recognize what kind of people local government elites are and whether local governments are really democratized, before considering decentralization.

Tables 4 to 6 demonstrate former jobs of elected local government chiefs in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. While Tables 4 and 6 are made from questionnaires, Table 5 is made of other sources prepared by Prof. Masaaki Okamoto.

From these tables, we can understand that those with experience in the business sector amount to around 40% and 25% in Thailand and the Philippines, respectively. What is impressive in Thailand is that around 30% of the local chiefs responded that their experience was in farming. We can imagine that local governance is being rooted in rural Thai areas.

Table 4 Occupation before becoming LAO president, which was undertaken for the longest period (Thailand)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. Business owner	183	39.6
2. Private employee	21	4.5
3. Agriculture	141	30.5
4. Teacher/ professor	38	8.2
5. Police or military officer	13	2.8
6. Other civil government official	9	1.9
7. Other (please specify)	26	5.6
8. No occupation	7	1.5
No answer	24	5.2

Table 5 Background of local heads and vice local heads in Java

	District head & mayor		Vice district head & mayor	
	2010–11	2016–17	2010–11	2016–17
Bureaucrat	35	19	32	30
Politician	48	56	43	53
Business person	20	21	14	12
Military/Police	4	4	2	2
Doctor, teacher, lecturer, lawyer, architect	3	8	10	7
Social entrepreneur (religious leader, activist)	2	2	11	7
Wife of ex-local head	0	3	0	1
Unknown	0	0	0	1
Total	112	113	112	113

Source: Prepared by Masaaki Okamoto.

Note: Professor Okamoto kindly offered this information by personal correspondence.

Table 6 Occupation before becoming mayor and occupation engaged longest (Philippines)

	Occupation before becoming mayor (N=300)		Occupation engaged longest (N=300)	
	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio
1. Business owner	186	62.0	121	40.3
2. Private employee	59	19.7	22	7.3
3. Lawyer	25	8.3	11	3.7
4. Professional other than the lawyer	43	14.3	22	7.3
5. Police or military officer	18	6.0	10	3.3
6. Other civil government official	57	19.0	29	9.7
7. Political elected official	104	34.7	57	19.0
8. NGO staff	11	3.7	1	0.3
9. Charitable activist	12	4.0	3	1.0
10. Land owner	79	26.3	23	7.7
11. Others (please specify)	0	0.0	1	0.3

Our study also conducted intensive surveys on top local bureaucrats as well. Former studies mostly pay attention to the social background and political networks of elected local chiefs, and pay little attention to local bureaucrats. However, in order to understand policy implementation and performance, the careers of top local bureaucrats cannot be ignored. Thus, we had disseminated questionnaires to the local secretaries in Thailand (*palat* in Thai), municipal planning and development officers in the Philippines, and local secretaries in Indonesia.

Table 7 Age of local secretaries (Thailand)

	Frequency	Ratio
20–29	7	1.5
30–39	80	17.3
40–49	212	45.9
50–59	136	29.4
60–69	2	0.4
No answer	25	5.4
Total	462	100.0

Figure 1 Working period as *palat* (Thailand)

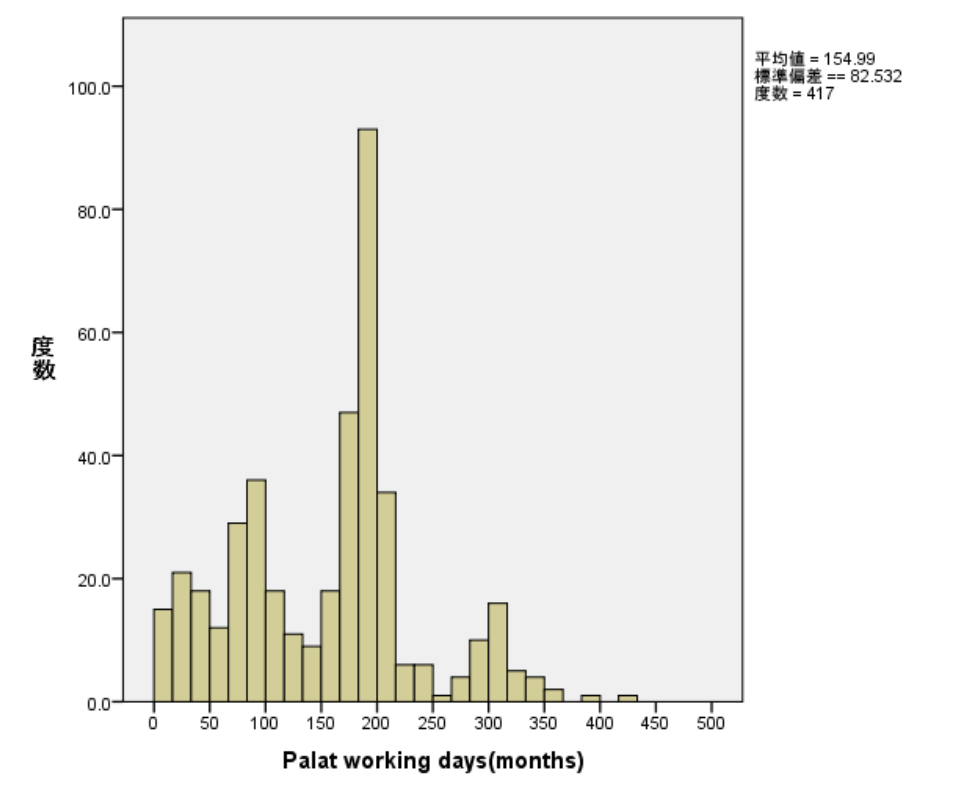


Table 8 Previous profession before taking up the position of local government secretary (Indonesia)

	Frequency	Ratio
Central government civil servant	7	6.8
Provincial government civil servant	4	3.9
District/city government civil servant	87	84.5
Others	5	4.9

Table 9 Occupation before joining this local government unit (Philippines)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. Private business	72	24.0
2. Government (central, provincial, and local government units)	68	22.7
3. Student or unemployed	27	9.0
4. School teacher (university, high school, middle school, and elementary school)	12	4.0
5. Self-employed	7	2.3
6. Others	114	38.0

As Table 7 shows, the average age of Thai local government secretaries is rather young. This is because young university graduates were employed around the middle of 1990s, when TAOs were established. This is well represented in Figure 1, which shows the working period for secretaries (*palat*). Local senior secretaries tend to work at bigger urban local governments (*thesaban*). Some of them used to work at the central governments, especially the Ministry of Interior.

The educational background of local Indonesian secretaries is very high. University undergraduates occupy 18.4 %, and those with a master's degree occupy 75.7%. Some have a doctoral degree. As for former jobs, as Table 7 shows, most of them used to work as bureaucrats either in provinces or cities. As for the age, those between 51 and 55 years old occupy 57.3%, and those between 56 and 60 years old occupy 28.2%.

In contrast to Indonesia, 75.7% of all municipal planning, and development officers have a bachelor's degree and only 23.3% have an MA degree in the Philippines. As Table 8 indicates, there is substantial number of municipal planning and development officers who have work experience in private companies, which indicates a more diverse job background compared with Indonesian local government secretaries. The working period of municipal planning and development officers is diverse, as is the case

of Thailand: 22% have worked since the 1980s, 37.3% worked since 1990s. Their ages are also very diverse; the biggest group is aged 46 to 50 years old (27.0%), followed by 50 to 51 years old (23.7%). There are some municipal planning and development officers younger than 30 years old.

From these evidences, it is clear that top local bureaucrats in the three countries have high educational backgrounds. Their ages and job experiences vary from one country to another. Indonesian local government secretaries are potential political rivals for elected local chiefs, because they sometimes campaign for their seats after their official retirement.

3.2 Local Autonomy

Question 2 Is local election competitive enough?

It is important to know whether local governance is well rooted among local residents. If the voting rate is quite low, it implies that local residents may not be interested in local governance. On the other hand, if the voting rate is too high, some other factors might be at play, such as vote buying.

Several questions arise regarding the number of candidates, voting rate, and so on in Thai questionnaires (see Table 10). As Table 10 shows, the average number of candidates is between three and four people, and the average voting ratio is 67.7%, which should be considered not too low and not too high. Indonesian questionnaires and the Philippines questionnaires do not have any questions of this sort. In the Philippines, local elections for the chief executives and councilors are held every three years, which coincides with other national elections, such as congressmen/women, senators, and the president (every six years). Each ballot contains all candidates. Unfortunately, separate data on local mayors could be extracted from the data of Commission on Election (COMELEC). In the case of the 2013 election, the average voting ratio was 82.38% nationwide. According to date from the COMELEC on the number of candidates and elected candidates, during the May 9, 2016 election, there were 4,158 candidates for 1,634 mayoral seats (competition ratio is about 2.54) and 33,737 candidates for 13,540 councilor positions (2.49). The number of contenders for local elections is less competitive than that of Thailand, but its voting turnout is considered to be higher than Thailand.

Table 10 Data of the most recent election (Thailand)

Questions	Average	S.D.
How many candidates were there? (N=432)	3.7	7.4
How many eligible voters took part in the most recent election for LAO President? (N=403)	7,438.9	7,632.8
How many residents (voters) voted in the most recent election for LAO President? (N=406)	5,026.2	3,777.6
Number of votes for the winner, who received the highest number of votes (N=408)	2,715.4	2,211.9
Number of votes for the winner, who received the second highest number of votes (N=402)	1,619.5	1,490.3

Question 3 Are local governments misappropriated by particular families or not?

In the three countries in Southeast Asia, existence of the “local kingdom” is sometimes mentioned. Even in Japan, former electoral district No. 3 of Niigata prefecture, which used to be Kakuei Tanaka’s famous constituency, is quite notable as a local kingdom and probably other constituencies represented by Liberal Democratic Party members of parliament, who succeeded from their fathers or fathers-in-law, are also sometimes referred as local kingdoms.

Though this may be the case, we do not know exactly whether the notion of the “local kingdom” is real or not. It may be even more difficult to know whether particular local governments are misappropriated by political families. If particular political families monopolize local chief executives, implementation of competitive local election may be rather difficult.

It is only Philippines’ questionnaires that have questions directly related to political families. Similar questions are not included in the Thai questionnaires. Due to the failure of collecting questionnaires from Indonesian local elected heads, we cannot analyze Indonesian political families based on questionnaires. Despite these limitations, there are additional questions related to local political families in the questionnaires. Below is an analysis of the results of simple tabulation.

Table 11 indicates the result of the survey in the Philippines. It indicates that the majority of respondents either grandfather/grandmother and/or father/mother ever occupied elected public posts.

Table 11 Did your grandfather/grandmother and/or father/mother ever occupy a politically elected position? (Philippines)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. Yes	169	56.3
2. No	131	43.7

Despite this evidence, subjective recognition by elected mayors toward the usefulness of this kin-network to win the vote is not strong. As Table 12 suggests, there were only 2.7% of respondents who listed family and relatives among the two most important supporters to win the local election.

Table 12 In your view, whose support is the most effective among those below when it comes to winning an Local Government Unit Election? (Allow two (2) responses only) (Philippines)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. NGO, PO	117	39.0
2. Barangay captain	188	62.7
3. Governor	54	18.0
4. Congressman	44	14.7
5. Senator	0	0.0
6. President	11	3.7
7. Others	8	2.7
8. Common local residents	76	25.3
9. Political supporters	10	3.3
10. Family and relatives	8	2.7
11. None	2	0.7
No answer	3	1.0

Different from the questionnaire in the Philippines, the Thai questionnaires asked elected local government heads to indicate the degree of influence from their “personal network, such as husbands, wives, relatives, and friends” in winning the local election. As Table 13 shows, one’s personal network is of importance to some extent.

The difference between the Philippines and Thailand may be partly attributed to the characteristics of the two societies—urban and rural—and average size of local governments. However, these results may not reject the conventional view of the existence of the “local kingdom” in Southeast Asia. Further study requires a more in-depth analysis.

Table 13 In your view, how important are the following factors to winning the LAO Presidential Election? (Thailand) (Upper: Frequency, Lower: Ratio)

	Very important	A little important	Not important	Not sure	No answer
1. The candidate's policies	352 76.2	93 20.1	13 2.8	1 0.2	3 0.6
2. People's perceptions of the candidate's personality	440 95.2	18 3.9	2 0.4	0 0.0	2 0.4
3. Team work among executive members	357 77.3	87 18.8	10 2.2	5 1.1	3 0.6
4. System of election canvassers	246 53.2	154 33.3	38 8.2	17 3.7	7 1.5
5. Support from national-level politicians (Members of parliament and Senators)	132 28.6	201 43.5	102 22.1	24 5.2	3 0.6
6. Budget support from political parties	106 22.9	207 44.8	116 25.1	28 6.1	5 1.1
7. Personal network (e.g., husband, wife, relatives, friends)	349 75.5	89 19.3	16 3.5	3 0.6	5 1.1
8. Response to the needs of poor people (various interest groups)	273 59.1	130 28.1	44 9.5	12 2.6	3 0.6

Thai questionnaires include a list of former elected local government heads during the last six years. If the same family names are recognized, they are possibly relatives; the rule of the local political family is implied.

Question 4 Are voices from local residents heard to realize public policies well?

Logically speaking, we cannot know whether voices from local residents are reflected in local governance, unless we ask local residents directly. Since our survey is focused on the elite, we cannot answer to this question directly. Instead, we can consider this question from other angles.

There are two questions related to this argument. One is from whom local government heads get ideas when embarking on new projects. Interestingly, the result turned out to be different among the three countries (Tables 14 to 17).

Table 14 When your LAO considers beginning new projects, from whom does it find ideas? (Please select the three most important sources from the list below, and rank them by writing 1, 2 or 3 in the space provided.) (Thailand)(Upper: Frequency, Lower: Ratio)

	First	Second	Third
1. President himself	112 24.2	79 17.1	88 19.0
2. Closely associated person (e.g. , husband, wife, other family members, friends)	2 0.4	3 0.6	7 1.5
3. Local council members	17 3.7	124 26.8	133 28.8
4. Residents / civil society groups	283 61.3	81 17.5	41 8.9
5. Community organizations (community councils)	6 1.3	31 6.7	38 8.2
6. Community groups (e.g. , housewife' groups, youth groups, elderly groups)	7 1.5	92 19.9	67 14.5
7. Intellectuals (researchers, NGOs)	1 0.2	4 0.9	9 1.9
8. PAO presidents or PAO councilors	1 0.2	2 0.4	6 1.3
9. Other local governments (<i>thesaban</i> , TAOs)	8 1.7	7 1.5	20 4.3
10. Provincial governor, district chief officer, or other officials	2 0.4	9 1.9	18 3.9
11. Others (please specify)	2 0.4	4 0.9	9 1.9
No answer	21 4.5	26 5.6	26 5.6

Table 15 When you think of embarking on new projects in the environment sector, from whom do you obtain ideas most often? (Allow two (2) responses) (Philippines)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. Yourself as mayor	168	56.0
2. Municipal/city councilors	51	17.0
3. Barangay captains	91	30.3
4. Business persons	12	4.0
5. NGO	37	12.3
6. Local PO (Peoples Organization)	17	5.7
7. Officials from your LGU	91	30.3

8. Common local residents other than NGO & PO	68	22.7
9. Provincial government	2	0.7
10. National government	10	3.3
11. International organization	1	0.3
12. Other government agencies *	2	0.7
13. Experts	8	2.7
14. Stakeholders	4	1.3
15. Media	2	0.7
16. All (including the councils of multisector)	5	1.7

* Including one (1) past local administration.

Table 16 When you think of embarking on new projects of infrastructure, from whom do you obtain ideas most often? (Allow two (2) Responses) (Philippines)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. Yourself as mayor	178	59.3
2. Municipal/city councilors	50	16.7
3. Barangay captains	108	36.0
4. Business persons	16	5.3
5. NGO	7	2.3
6. Local PO	6	2.0
7. Officials from your LGU	100	33.3
8. Common local residents other than NGO & PO	65	21.7
9. National government	6	3.0
10. Congressperson	2	0.7
11. International organization	1	0.3
12. Other local government units	1	0.3
13. Experts	7	2.3
14. Stakeholders	2	0.7
15. All (including the councils of multisector)	8	2.7

Table 17 Based on your observations as local government secretary, over the last year, when thinking of ideas for a new program of development, did the district head/mayor always, often, rarely, or never discuss these ideas with the following officers or parties? (Indonesia) (Upper: Frequency, Lower: Ratio)

	Always	Often	Rarely	Never	NA
1. Vice district head / vice mayor	41	43	10	7	2
	39.8	41.7	9.7	6.8	1.9
2. Local government secretary	69	34	0	0	0
	67.0	33.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3. Head of local development agency (BAPPEDA)	65	37	1	0	0
	63.1	35.9	1.0	0.0	0.0
4. Department heads (<i>kepala dinas</i>)	46	53	4	0	0
	44.7	51.5	3.9	0.0	0.0
5. National MP	2	16	62	20	3
	1.9	15.5	60.2	19.4	2.9

6. Local assembly member of your district/city	31 30.1	48 46.6	19 18.4	3 2.9	2 1.9
7. Other politicians (board member, etc.)	5 4.9	23 22.3	49 47.6	21 20.4	5 4.9
8. Persons that you can depend on personally (husband, wife, family, friends, etc.)	8 7.8	22 21.4	26 25.2	39 37.9	8 7.8
9. Socially respected figures (religious figures, activist of NGO and/or mass organization, lecturer)	9 8.7	64 62.1	27 26.2	2 1.9	1 1.0
10. International bodies	1 1.0	14 13.6	51 49.5	30 29.1	7 6.8
11. Entrepreneur/business association (Chamber of Commerce, Construction Company Association, etc.)	7 6.8	52 50.5	36 35.0	4 3.9	4 3.9
12. Others	3 2.9	9 8.7	5 4.9	4 3.9	82 79.6

In the Philippines, most ideas derive from mayors themselves, followed by the barangay captain, and local bureaucrats, regarding environmental policies as well as infrastructures. There is no mention of local residents. Indonesian questionnaires should be treated carefully because the results are given through the eyes of local secretaries and not through the choices of local residents. Under this condition, the priority follows from **the local secretary**, director-general of local development, and directors. Local councilors of their own local government are the fourth priority. The local government in Thailand is the smallest body among the three countries; naturally, it is closer to local residents. On the other hand, local governments tend to be big in terms of population and size. In the Philippines and Indonesia, local government heads tend to rely on ideas from local influential persons and local bureaucracy.

Another question of interest is whether local government heads prefer either the opinions of local council or those of local residents when they contradict each other. Over 90% of Indonesian local heads, though through the local secretary's eye, prefer the opinions of local residents; for Thai local heads, this figure is 83%. It is safe to say that local government heads in both countries at least acknowledge the importance of listening to voices from local residents, despite of the different size of local governments.

3.3 Local Government's Policy Networks

Question 5 What kind of networks do local governments possess?

Local government elites should have various networks to obtain knowledge and personnel and financial resources. Their relationship with various stakeholders in their own jurisdiction may be significant when getting ideas and implementing policies.

Questionnaires in the three countries contained various questions on networks, especially on the frequency of meeting for official purposes (Questions 18 to 21).

Table 18 Do any public officials visit the LAO office for consultation on LAO activities? (Thailand, N=462) (Upper: Frequency, Lower: Ratio)

Visitor	Frequency of visits						No answer
	More than once a week	Several times a month	Once a month	Once in 2-3 months	Once or twice a year	Never	
1. Teachers/professors from schools	51 11.0	146 31.6	106 22.9	104 22.5	44 9.5	3 0.6	8 1.7
2. Public health officials	51 11.0	162 35.1	116 25.1	83 18.0	37 8.0	3 0.6	10 2.2
3. Local council members of your LAO	221 47.8	173 37.4	38 8.2	16 3.5	5 1.1	2 0.4	7 1.5
4. Business persons	21 4.5	61 13.2	55 11.9	126 27.3	114 24.7	65 14.1	20 4.3
5. President of other LAOs	19 4.1	61 13.2	99 21.4	137 29.7	102 22.1	35 7.6	9 1.9
6. Clerk of other LAOs	20 4.3	46 10.0	70 15.2	134 29.0	125 27.1	57 12.3	10 2.2
7. <i>Kamnan</i> , village headman	106 22.9	200 43.3	76 16.5	38 8.2	23 5.0	11 2.4	8 1.7
8. NGO members	14 3.0	67 14.5	83 18.0	104 22.5	101 21.9	71 15.4	22 4.8
9. People's group (e.g., housewife groups, female groups, elderly groups)	77 16.7	200 43.3	98 21.2	50 10.8	27 5.8	3 0.6	7 1.5
10. Officials from	10	56	82	113	117	75	9

Dept. of Local Administration	2.2	12.1	17.7	24.5	25.3	16.2	1.9
11. Chief district officer or assistant district officers	18	61	96	140	110	29	8
	3.9	13.2	20.8	30.3	23.8	6.3	1.7
12. Provincial governor (vice governor)/ deputy governor	4	18	33	58	152	185	12
	0.9	3.9	7.1	12.6	32.9	40.0	2.6
13. Members of parliament	5	24	48	106	142	130	7
	1.1	5.2	10.4	22.9	30.7	28.1	1.5
14. Officials from Social Development and Human Security Ministry	6	32	74	127	157	60	6
	1.3	6.9	16.0	27.5	34.0	13.0	1.3
15. Officials from Community Development Dept.	11	66	111	144	100	23	7
	2.4	14.3	24.0	31.2	21.6	5.0	1.5

Table 19 How often do you meet the people listed below? (One answer only) (Philippines)

	Several times/ week		Once/ week		2–3 times/ month		Once/ month		Several times/ year		None		Others		No answer	
	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio
1. Barangay captains	139	46.3	42	14.0	41	13.7	59	19.7	18	6.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
2. Municipal/city councilors	123	41.0	103	34.3	29	9.7	27	9.0	16	5.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.7
3. Members of NGO	53	17.7	34	11.3	55	18.3	77	25.7	75	25.0	3	1.0	1	0.3	2	0.7
4. Members of local POs	49	16.3	38	12.7	54	18.0	80	26.7	73	24.3	4	1.3	1	0.3	1	0.3
5. Members of civic groups such as Rotary Club, etc.	28	9.3	24	8.0	37	12.3	64	21.3	89	29.7	55	18.3	1	0.3	2	0.7
6. People from business entities	45	15.0	25	8.3	43	14.3	72	24.0	97	32.3	16	5.3	1	0.3	1	0.3
7. Common residents except NGO, civic group & local PO	181	60.3	24	8.0	25	8.3	23	7.7	44	14.7	2	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.3

Table 20 How often did you meet the people listed below in the past year? (Philippines)

	Not applicable		More than once / month		Once / month		Several times / year		Once/ year		None		No answer /don't know	
	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio
1. governor (except the LGUs in NCR)	18*1	6.0	97	32.3	64	21.3	83	27.7	8	2.7	27	9.0	3	1.0
2. Congressman from my district	0	0.0	113	37.7	50	16.7	91	30.3	9	3.0	34	11.3	3	1.0
3. Party list congressmen	0	0.0	20	6.7	29	9.7	81	27.0	66	22.0	100	33.3	4	1.3
4. Senators	0	0.0	10	3.3	13	4.3	99	33.0	85	28.3	88	29.3	5	1.7
5. Under secretaries of the departments	1*2	0.3	8	2.7	15	5.0	102	34.0	87	29.0	84	28.0	3	1.0
6. Secretaries of the departments	1*2	0.3	8	2.7	17	5.7	103	34.3	86	28.7	82	27.3	3	1.0
7. President	1*2	0.3	0	0.0	3	1.0	63	21.0	83	27.7	147	49.0	3	1.0

*1 This item is not applicable for the local governments such as those within National Capital Region which are outside the jurisdiction of the province.

*2 There is no restriction placed on any local governments to making contact with the President, secretaries and under-secretaries of the departments. We, however, leave the answer “not applicable” as it is.

Table 21 How often do you meet directly (face-to-face) with the following officers and figures to ensure your duty as local government secretary are smoothly carried out? (Indonesia)
(Upper: Frequency, Lower: Ratio)

	Never	1-2 times a year	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	N.A.
1. Minister	22 21.4	33 32.0	45 43.7	2 1.9	1 1.0	0 0.0
2. Ministry's office (director-general, director)	8 7.8	23 22.3	61 59.2	6 5.8	5 4.9	0 0.0
3. National MP	15 14.6	43 41.7	43 41.7	1 1.0	0 0.0	1 1.0
4. Provincial assembly member	10 9.7	30 29.1	50 48.5	5 4.9	8 7.8	0 0.0
5. Your district/city assembly member	0 0.0	1 1.0	12 11.7	10 9.7	79 76.7	1 1.0
6. Provincial governor	6 5.8	11 10.7	59 57.3	14 13.6	13 12.6	0 0.0
7. Provincial high-ranking officer (provincial government secretary, department heads)	2 1.9	3 2.9	52 50.5	25 24.3	21 20.4	0 0.0
8. District head/mayor and high-ranking officers of neighboring district/city	1 1.0	6 5.8	27 26.2	5 4.9	63 61.2	1 1.0
9. Sub-district head	1 1.0	0 0.0	6 5.8	18 17.5	77 74.8	1 1.0
10. Village head	1 1.0	9 8.7	26 25.2	21 20.4	45 43.7	1 1.0
11. International Organization	28 27.2	55 53.4	15 14.6	3 2.9	1 1.0	1 1.0
12. Entrepreneur/business association (Chamber of Commerce, Construction Company Association, etc.)	8 7.8	23 22.3	47 45.6	12 11.7	12 11.7	1 1.0
13. Activist of NGO and/or mass organization	4 3.9	9 8.7	42 40.8	12 11.7	35 34.0	1 1.0
14. Others	2 1.9	1 1.0	15 14.6	2 1.9	12 11.7	71 68.9

In Thailand, *kamnan*ⁱ, village headmen, health center officials as well as school teachers in the same *tambon* meet at local governments quite often. Health center officials and school teachers are mostly central government officials. *Kamnan* and village headmen, though elected by local residents, perform assignments by the central government. Thailand has dual administrative systems in local area, namely, local administration as field offices of the central government and local governments as local autonomous bodies. Thus, this pattern of frequent meeting reflects on these characteristics of the Thai administrative system.

What is distinct in the Philippines is the frequent meeting with local residents, barangay captains, and local councilors. Frequency of meeting with officials, central or local, in the Philippines is far less than in Thailand.

While elected local government heads in Thailand and the Philippines responded to questionnaires, it is top bureaucrats who respond to the questionnaires in Indonesia. Because of this condition, local secretaries meet frequently with local councilors, local government heads in neighboring local governments, and district officers in their own jurisdiction. This tendency is confirmed in the same question of frequency of contact by mobile phones.

Questionnaires distributed in each country also asked local government heads who rely on in time of budget shortage. In Thailand, contact with local councilors of the Provincial Administrative Organization, which is the higher tier of local government, and members of parliament is very frequent. In the Philippines, congressmen and provincial governors are ranked highly, and the third seat goes, interestingly, to the private sector. Members of parliament are ranked highly in Indonesia, but what is interesting is that the second most frequent contact goes to high-ranking officials in central ministries (though this data is about local secretaries).

3.4 Policy Implementation

Question 6 Recognition on “Good Governance”

Lastly, our survey also asked how “good governance,” which is emphasized by international organizations such as the World Bank and IMF, is recognized by local government elites in the three countries. This question is concerned with the value held by local government elites in implementing policies. Again, Indonesia will be excluded, due to the lack of data from local government heads.

Though the sentences in the surveys are slightly different in Thailand and the

Philippines, the content is similar, and asks whether local government heads prefer either efficiency of policy implementation or satisfaction by local residents. While 86.8% of Thai local government heads replied efficiency, replies from the Philippine local government heads are divided almost half and half (see Table 22 and 23). This result may sound strange, because more rural local governments in Thailand emphasize efficiency of policy implementation. This result may be attributed to two reasons. One is that budget constraints of local government in Thailand are much bigger than that of the Philippines. Second is that political competition in the Philippines is more severe than in Thailand. Local elections are held every three years in the Philippines. This means that local government heads in the Philippines must demonstrate their accomplishments within three years. It is very important for them to raise people's satisfaction to be reelected.

Table 22 How do you consider good governance to be implemented in projects at the local level? (please choose only one answer) (Thailand)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. To implement projects efficiently with a small budget	401	86.8
2. To implement projects that meet the needs of residents by using time and budget efficiently	50	10.8
No answer	11	2.4

Table 23 In your opinion, what is the good local governance? (One answer only) (Philippines)

	Frequency	Ratio
1. To implement projects with lower cost and faster speed	179	59.7
2. To satisfy as much as the widest range of constituents regardless of the cost and speed of project implementation	121	40.3

4 Common Features and Different Characteristics of Local Governance in Each Country through Simple Tabulation

From the above rough sketch of the simple tabulation results of the local government survey in three Southeast Asian countries, we can identify several distinctive characteristics as well as common features.

First of all, democratization and decentralization brought local autonomy in terms of local democracy by local residents and local autonomy from the central government.

Though the degrees of local democracy and local autonomy may differ from one country to another, simple tabulation results strongly suggest that local government heads pay more attention to people's needs and demands.

Second, the social background of local government heads is diverse among the three countries. These countries have a substantial number of local government heads with business backgrounds, though its percentage is very different. In fact, diversification of social background differs from one country to another. For instance, many Thai local government heads are farmers. Around one-third of Indonesian local government heads are former bureaucrats. These differences may reflect on the country's type of authoritarian regime and socioeconomic conditions.

Third, due to the distinctive characteristics of local government systems and sizes, the networking of local governments in each country is different across the three countries. In the case of Thailand, because of the country's small population as well as budget limitations, local governments tend to respond to local needs. Local government elites in Thailand also have to cooperate well with central government officials, such as health center officials, school teachers, *kamnan*, and village headmen. Local government in the Philippines also pays due attention to the satisfaction of local residents. While local government heads in the Philippines tend to have direct relationships with local residents, barangay captains and local councilors, they do not rely so much on bureaucracy. Indonesian local governments have large population sizes as well as large budgets, so local government heads must rely heavily on bureaucracy in terms of policy decisions, policy implementation, and budget acquisition. These results tell us that the local governments in each country have their various networks, which is rather far from the conventional image of the local government ruled by a particular political family. Except for Thailand, both the Philippines and Indonesia seem to enjoy higher local autonomy from the central government.

The local government elite survey has a high potential for further research, as it provides solid evidence regarding how local democracy is consolidated and practices at the grassroots level. Through local government elites, we can vividly sense how a governing body adjusts to the changing needs and requests from local society.

We can get establish a more concrete image on local governance through transforming the pattern of daily activities of local governance into quantitative information. What is striking is that local government has a broad network of connections with various stakeholders, such as national agencies, national politicians, and business people. Local governments are closely watched by local residents. Contrary to the conventional image of local government ruled by a particular political

family, local political leaders have to extend their support to various stakeholders. They do not solely depend on their families. Thus, by constructing variables, many windows may be opened to tackle conventional views regarding local governance.

As is evident in this paper, a more accurate and comprehensive politico-sociological landscape can be achieved in the three countries. We may even explore the difference of political cultures among different geographical regions. This kind of information may not be easily collected in developed countries. In this sense, the local government elite survey should be promoted more.

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NOTE

ⁱ *Kamnan*, elected among village headmen by local residents in *tambon*, the second lowest grass-root administrative unit in Thailand, assume various assigned jobs by the central government, especially those of the Ministry of Interior. Village headmen, who are elected by villagers, also assume various jobs by the central government. *Kamnan* and village headmen are rewarded by monthly allowances from the Ministry of Interior and have some privileges similar to national bureaucrats, such as social securities. While local governments are more concerned about economic development, income generation, and social safety nets for local residents, *Kamnan* and village headmen are

more concerned with internal peace and order in their respective jurisdictions.